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A History of the first 100
years of St. Mary's Parish,

ST. MARY'S
CENTENNIAL



St. Mary's CENTENNIAL

1861 - 1961
North Vernon, Indiana.

*"His Mercy is From Generation to
Generation." - (Magnificat)*

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St. Mary's CENTENNIAL

1861 - 1961

North Vernon, Indiana

The Story of a Great Parish

Edited by Rev. Fr. J. J. O'Connell

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Early History

The history of the early years of the parish is a story of faith and courage. It begins with the first settlers who came to the area in the early 1800s. They were men of vision and conviction who saw the potential of the land and the people who lived there. They were men who believed in the power of God and the importance of the Church. They were men who were willing to sacrifice and to endure hardship for the sake of their faith and their community.

The early years of the parish were a time of great struggle and sacrifice. The settlers faced many hardships, including poverty, disease, and persecution. But they did not give up. They continued to build their community and their faith, and they laid the foundation for the parish that we know today.

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A HISTORY of * The First 100 Years of St. Mary's Parish North Vernon, Indiana 1861 - 1961

Grateful Acknowledgment

To Hannah Wickens and family for recollections of Father Missi's pastorate, given to Father Eisenman in his early years.

To Joseph McAuliffe, Paul Byron and Betty Ann Cull for their selection and shaping of material taken from Father Eisenman's Chronicle of the Parish.

To Robert Smith for photographic work.

To the printers, and to all who contributed in minor capacities.

Early History

The beginnings of organized Catholicity in Jennings County date back to the closing years of Simon Brute, first Bishop of Vincennes, who died in 1839. Bishop Gailandiere, his successor, had collected money and church supplies in France for the Diocese of Vincennes, which comprised all of Indiana, and also enlisted the services of some valiant volunteer priests for the wilderness missions. Chicago and Indianapolis were mere villages in the unbroken wilderness when he laid the foundations for Notre Dame and St. Mary's-of-the-Woods. These newly-recruited priests were equipped and stationed at their missions, and log churches began to be constructed at various sites for the convenience of the pioneer Catholics.

In Jennings County, the pioneer families had been accustomed to journey on foot through the woods to Madison, to attend mass and receive the sacraments on special occasions. Fathers Munchino and Chartier visited them from Madison and baptized children in various sections of the county. And the Catholic settlers undoubtedly had occasional ministrations from other priests, who, on their arrival would pass the word to the scattered Catholics.

An interesting sidelight on this period is furnished by the court house records at Vernon. Lots 120 and 121 in Vernon (N.W. Cor. of Washington and Montgomery Sts.) were purchased by Bishop Brute, seemingly with the intention of providing a site for an Academy, in 1838. This was some 20 years after Vernon was established. These lots were sold by the bishop in 1849.

In 1840, the Catholics of the County laid plans for the erection of log churches at St. Ann, St. Catherine and Scipio, and the buildings were erected at these sites in 1841. St. Ann's Parish is the only survivor of these pioneer foundations.

The Extinct Missions

ST. CATHERINE CHURCH was situated about 4 miles S.W. of North Vernon, on two acres of ground, on the ridge in the Indian Creek neighborhood. A cemetery marks the site. The first log church (40 ft. x 25 ft.) was built in

1841, under supervision of Father Chartier from Madison. This structure was replaced by a frame church (50 ft. x 30 ft.), in 1849, with construction probably directed by Father Daniel Molony from Columbus. There were 20 Irish and 7 German families in the congregation in 1843. This mission was attended at various stages of its existence by neighboring priests, but racial friction did not provide a fertile ground for its development. It ceased to function in 1871, 30 years after its establishment, and the members affiliated with St. Mary's at North Vernon or with St. James' (now St. Joseph's) at Four Corners (established in 1850).

ST. PATRICK'S CHURCH, SCIPIO, was also built in 1841, and church services began in 1842. In the beginning, it was attended by priests from Madison. The 1844 Catholic Directory listed Father Roman Weinzoepfel as pastor. It was attended by:

Fr. Daniel Molony (1845-52) from Madison, and later from Columbus;

Fr. Edw. Martinovic (1855) from Columbus;

Fr. Philip Doyle (1857-58);

Fr. Daniel Molony (1859-63) seems to have been a resident pastor;

Fr. Stolz (1863-71) from Four Corners (then St. James);

Fr. Merz (1871-73) from Four Corners;

Fr. Kintrop (1873-74) from Four Corners;

Fr. Missi (1875-93) from North Vernon. Sixty families at the time.

Fr. Thie (1892-94) from St. Joseph Church, Four Corners;

Fr. Delaney (1904-08) from St. Dennis;

Fr. Garrity (1908-16) from St. Dennis;

Fr. Henry Hunger (1916-20) from Four Corners;

Fr. Omer Eisenman (1920-24) from Four Corners;

Fr. Dixon (1924-27) from Four Corners;

Fr. Edw. Eisenman (1927-29) from Four Corners;

Fr. Matthias Schmitz (1929-34) from Four Corners;

Fr. Louis Becher (1934-35) from Four Corners;

Fr. Raymond Marchino (1935-40) from Four Corners;

Fr. Joseph Laugel (1940-43) from Four Corners;

Fr. Cyril Conen (1943-49) from Four Corners;

Fr. Edw. Eisenman (1949-58) from Four Corners.

Services were suspended at the Mission on March 20, 1958, after the congregation had practically become extinct. Its survival as a mission for 116 years constitutes a rather unique record. Through the years, mass was always celebrated each month on the third Sunday. The frame church was remodeled in 1916, and it still stands, surrounded by the cemetery.

Fr. Daniel Molony is buried beside the church door. Born in Ireland, in 1803, he completed his studies for the priesthood in Paris and in his native land, and was ordained priest at Vincennes, in 1845, by Bishop Hailandiere, after teaching at Maynooth University for 14 years. He died in retirement, in 1874, on the former Ella Haley homestead near Queensville. He served in many parishes of the diocese, and impressed them with his priestly zeal. He was one of the stalwart pioneer priests of our diocese.

ST. BRIGID'S CHURCH, NEBRASKA, a frame building, stood near the eastern limit of the village of Nebraska, just south of Highway 50. It was erected in 1867 on ground acquired by Bishop St. Palais, probably to service the numerous families of Irish descent who settled in that neighborhood during the construction of the Baltimore and Ohio Branch Line, from North Vernon to Louisville. It was attended by Fr. Missi (1868-88) from North Vernon, until shortly before his death. Then it was attended by Fr. Ulrich (1888-1904) from St. Ann; by Fr. Delany (1904-07) and Fr. Garrity (1907-16) from St. Dennis; by Fr. Moss (1916-21) from Osgood. After that date, it was serviced by the pastors from Four Corners until services were discontinued at the mission, about 1930. The church was removed and the ground sold on March 18, 1936. This mission had numbered some 60 families in 1883, but there were scarcely any survivors when it closed after an existence of 60 years.



First Masses in North Vernon

From 1846 to 1856 Father Alphonse Munschina of St. Ann's celebrated the first masses in North Vernon. From 1853 until 1858, masses were celebrated in the Kilgannon home on the south side of Hoosier St. Between 5th Street and 6th Street; also in an upstairs room of the Hemberger home, on the site now occupied by the main downtown hotel, near the depot. Bishop St. Palais celebrated mass on one occasion, and Father Molony on another. Children were baptized on these occasions.

The Founding Pastor

Rev. John M. Missi has the distinction of having spent his entire priestly career in Jennings County, and all of these 30 years were associated with St. Mary's Parish. He was born on March 13, 1833 at Waldmohr, Germany (Diocese of Speyer), emigrated to the U.S.A. in 1836 and settled near New Albany, Indiana. His Seminary training was received in the Diocesan College at Vincennes (1853-59), and he was there ordained priest by Bishop St. Palais on Dec. 8, 1859. He was appointed pastor of the neighboring St. Ann's Church on Dec. 25, 1859, residing there and attending St. Mary's as a mission for nine years. He started construction of St. Mary's Church in October 1861 but the work was interrupted by the outbreak of the Civil War when his workmen organized a company of volunteers and joined the army. This was at the time of Morgan's Raid (1863) and his work foreman was the future Major General Joe Stricker. Father Missi had the workmen wall in the north end of the church, and the building was completed after the war in 1868 and the main altar was installed at that time. It had no tower. St. Mary's was dedicated under the title "Nativity of the Blessed Virgin."

He probably built the front portion of the present brick rectory, with two rooms downstairs and two upstairs, with the stairway just inside the front door. His living quarters were in the downstairs room facing the church, with a curtain dividing his office from his bed-

room. It was there that he finally died in his bed. The parish apparently owned only the lots occupied by church and rectory, at this date. East of the rectory, across the alley stood a brick house and two frame dwellings beyond, fronting on Washington street. The rectory was heated with stoves, and there was no city water nor electric lights but there was a small cistern. He remodeled the rectory in 1886, shortly before his death.

St. Mary's Cemetery was opened in 1854, with John Rech as the first burial. It was situated about a quarter of a mile N.W. of the church on Madison Ave., near the then city limits, and comprised only one city lot. Additions were made by future pastors. In 1886, a cemetery mortuary chapel was built by Father Missi.

The original First Holy Communion class at St. Mary's was in 1864, with Father Missi coming from St. Ann's. In 1865-66, the first two-room brick school (one room above, one below) was constructed in the rear of the church and somewhat to the east. Lay teachers were employed with the children of Irish descent being taught upstairs and those of German descent downstairs. Nicholas Wolfram (brother of Theodore) and a Mr. Ley were among the early lay teachers. George Nodler came from Madison, and taught at least two terms of 10 months each. His living quarters were upstairs in the school, and he was assisted by his sister-in-law, Miss Kyle.

He was an able and forceful teacher, but intemperate and severe. School subjects were taught in both English and German, and some non-Catholics of German descent sent their children to him, until the German language began to be taught in the public school. He became a Justice of the Peace after the Sisters took over the school. James Foley, a brother of Rev. Mother M. Cleophas (St. Mary's-of-the-Woods), was the last lay teacher in 1870. When Father Missi was able to get the Sisters of St. Francis, from Oldenburg, in 1872, they occupied a residence on Madison Ave., across the alley from their present house, which had been donated by Mrs. Winters. This residence was later sold, and the proceeds used to construct the mortuary chapel at the cemetery. Sister M. Olivia (later Rev. Mother Olivia) was one of the early teachers.

Soon after Father Missi came to North Vernon, he organized an Altar Society, which was later divided into two groups, with the Germans in St. Mary's Society and the Irish in St. Bridget's Society.

Much of Father Missi's time and labor was spent in the service of the neighboring missions. At the time of his appointment to North Vernon, he attended the missions of Lexington, Scipio and Nebraska. He held services in Scipio in 1872, and again from 1875 until his last illness. In 1878 he also attended Osgood. He probably began to hold services at Lexington and Nebraska in 1868, and continued until 1886 or 1888. There are no complete records. Father Missi's handwriting was terrible, and he was sparing with his notations. The section-hands on the railroad took him to Scipio and Nebraska on their hand-cars, which they pumped by hand. The mass servers went along in cassock and surplice, with censer and holy water, and they even took an organ. These trips were also made in winter. Later on, when traffic increased on the lines, the railroads stopped this practise. The Louisville Branch of the B & O R. R. was built about the time St. Mary's Church was enlarged and the Nebraska Mission established, and it was Father Missi's practise to travel on the monthly pay-car of the railroad, collecting money from the men to complete his church. The men were paid in cash, and they would each give him a silver dollar.

He was appointed Rural Dean in 1886. After almost 30 years of devoted service and unsparing work in Jennings County and vicinity, his great heart began to fail and he was confined to his bed in the rectory. Father August Sennefeld came to assist him with the parish work, in August 1889, and remained for five months. Father Missi went to his eternal reward on Dec. 3, 1889, and his death marked the end of an era in the parish. The bells of St. Mary's tolled their sad notes, and Bishop Chatard and pastors of Southern Indiana came to the funeral, until the church filled to overflowing with priests and people. Bishop Chatard preached in English and Father Scheidler in German, and there were few dry eyes. He was buried in St. Mary's Cemetery beside the chapel, mourned by the entire community.



Finding a Successor to Father Missi

The three years and three months which followed his death were difficult times for the parish. Nothing is recorded except the baptismal records. Father G. M. Ginnsz was pastor from Jan., 1890 until Feb., 1892. He was succeeded by Father Ferdinand Hundt until Nov., 1892. Then Father J. Adam Urlich ministered to St. Mary's from St. Ann's Parish for five months until Apr., 1893. The parish trustees refused to surrender the church account books to Father Urlich until he threatened them with a court order. The Parish was in sore need of a strong and efficient pastor.

The Good Shepherd

Rev. George L. T. Widerin was transferred from North Madison to North Vernon on Apr. 3, 1893, when he took over the pastorate. He was born on July 20, 1847 in Louisville, Ky. and moved to New Albany at the age of four. He was a member of Company A, 144th. Ind. Infantry during the Civil War. He completed his seminary course at St. Meinrad (1872-77) and was ordained a priest on May 28, 1877. He was pastor of St. Mary's Church, North Vernon, until his death on Feb. 3, 1920.

Coming to North Vernon, Father Widerin kept his counsel and went to work. Gradually he reconciled the factions in the parish and put the people to work. He used every resource to finance the parish, stirring rivalry among the parish societies for better results. He always kept the high respect of the community, and his patriotism was enhanced by his war record. This was evidenced during the Ku Klux Klan activity, in 1919, when he erected a lofty flag pole and unfurled a huge American flag on the school grounds. He kept accurate and detailed accounts of parish finances and activities. Various parish societies were established during his pastorate, and all were active. Soon he was beloved by all the school children. He began to pay off the parish indebtedness.

At that time, the church was heated by two stoves, and it had no tower nor stained glass windows. One of his first enterprises was to have the water mains extended to the church property. Then

he put stained glass windows in the church, and added the statue of the Sacred Heart of Mary. The Madison Ave. (now Second St.) road to the cemetery was rocked and graveled by volunteer parish labor. Church and rectory roofs were repaired, during the following year, and an iron fence erected on the parish property. Church fairs were held each fall, to supplement the parish revenues. The parish was soon a going concern. School was conducted in the 2-room building in the church yard, with from 100 to 115 pupils in attendance. Steady improvement of the property continued during the following years, with the church interior decorated, and new floors laid and circular windows added in the sanctuary, and some new statuary and a pipe organ installed, in 1902. The cemetery (rear portion) was graded and an iron fence erected, in 1904, and an addition built on the rectory.

The Y.M.I. (Young Mens Institute) was organized in the parish, in 1902, and supplanted by the Knights of Columbus, in 1912.

The Church Tower

This landmark of the parish and community was erected in 1897. Records indicate that the parishoners hauled 60,000 bricks and 75 wagon loads of sand for its construction by J. B. Miller. After the work had started, the non-Catholics joined with the Catholics and sent a delegation to Father Widerin, requesting that a tower clock be installed. This necessitated an addition of 20 ft. to the height of the tower and changed the planned proportion. The subsequent tornado in 1917 demonstrated the solidity of the structure. A subscription by citizens and parishioners was taken up to defray the cost, which was about \$4,000.00. At this time, Father Widerin discarded the old bells and installed a fine peal of bells, purchased from Stuckstede of St. Louis, at a cost of about \$800.00. The large bell weighs 1548 lbs., the medium bell 826 lbs., and the small one 504 lbs. The Seth Thomas tower clock cost \$600.00 and has given wonderful service through its 64 years.

On May 26, 1902, Father Widerin celebrated the 25th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood with a

Solemn High Mass followed by a reception that evening in the parish hall. Twenty three priests attended and Father was the recipient of many gifts from priests and parishioners.

The Parish School

This was Father Widerin's outstanding achievement. The building site was purchased in 1905; blueprints drawn in 1906 by Bohlen and Sons of Indianapolis, and a parish subscription taken up in 1907. The stone foundation was laid by Mike Kirchner, and the remainder of the building constructed by J. B. Miller. This building is remarkable for its solidity and its general adaptability to later changes, and it seems to have been constructed for a total cost of less than \$17,000.00 Boiler and steam radiation were installed by Harry Hicks. The plumbing was primitive by present standards, and much of the interior necessarily remained unfinished until the debt was reduced, but these details were added later. One marvels at Father Widerin's success in this project. Three classrooms were started in the new school. Quite a celebration was held on the day of its dedication, June 21, 1908, by Bishop Dennis O'Donaghue. As a final touch, shade trees were planted in the school yard. This debt was finally paid in 1915.

Further Improvements

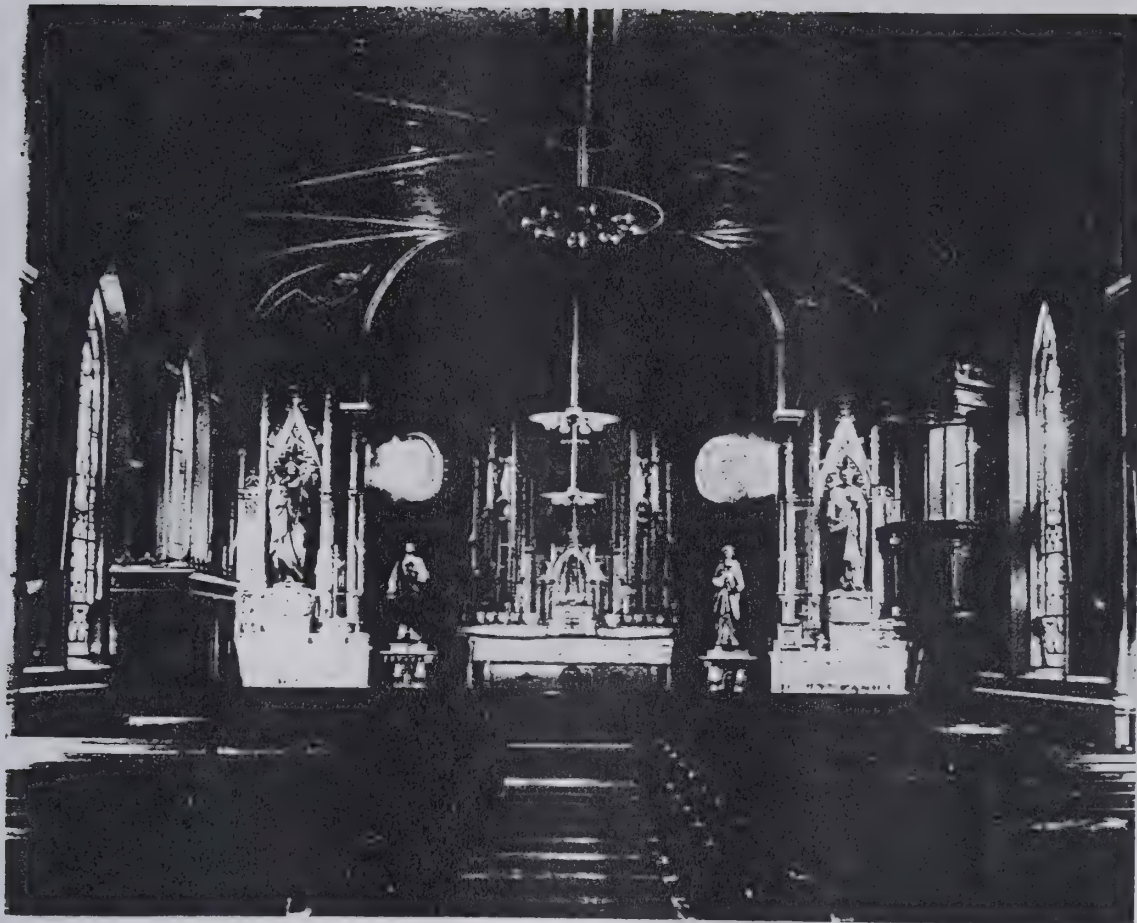
In 1911, an upper story was added to the Sisters' residence, a hot water heating system installed in the rectory, and the communion rail and set of Stations placed in the church. In 1912, two lots were purchased on Clay St., adjoining the church property, and a residence erected for the parish custodian. That same year, he constructed a private sewer, connecting all the buildings on parish property, and emptying into the city sewer on Second St. This sewer continues to function. Also, a hot air furnace was installed in the church, and all buildings equipped with lightning rods. Beautiful onyx candle sticks were purchased for the altars, in 1914, and altar lights installed. School desks were purchased for the class rooms, and a room built for use of the Sisters.

The Big Wind

A tornado struck the town early in the evening of Pentecost Saturday, May 26, 1917. The town in general was a shambles, and the streets were littered with fallen trees and electric light wires. No lives were lost, because the tornado struck at an hour when most of the citizens were in downtown stores. Tower crosses on church and school were bent, and the school roof was severely damaged. Insurance was collected in the amount of almost \$900.00. But it also brought a blessing for the Parish. Father Widerin had been trying, without success, to buy the three old residences along Washington St., east of the rectory. The wind flattened them and he soon struck a good bargain. A large slough extended diagonally across this area, but it was filled in the later years and is now used as the parking lot.



Original Church and Rectory



Church Interior About 1900

The Bell Tolls Again

Father Widerin's health began to decline. The number of souls in the parish had lessened somewhat from the higher figure of previous years. Father seemed to have had a premonition that the parish burden would soon be shifted to other shoulders, and he made a final payment of \$1,600.00 on the parish debt. At the end of 1918 there was a sinking fund of some \$3,000.00. Meanwhile, Father Meinrad Rouck had arrived in May, fresh from ordination, to assist him with the operation of the parish. As the end drew closer, Dr. Dennis McAuliffe made frequent calls at the rectory. Again, it was a big heart beating out at the end of a long life of

dedication and sacrifice. He died in the rectory on Feb. 3, 1920, and was interred in St. Mary's Cemetery.

His death was a big loss for parish and community. He was a man of few words; austere but kind. He would never have been able to accomplish so much during his lifetime without hard work and system. He combined a native caution with good business judgment. He was universally respected and loved, especially by the children, who sensed his sterling qualities and unswerving justice. For many years, the business men of the town had made regular contributions for his annual Christmas gift. His pastorate was a blessing to St. Mary's Parish.

The Busy Assistant

Rev. Meinrad Rouck was born on March 5, 1887, near New Albany, and ordained on April 24, 1918 at St. Meinrad. During Father Rouck's months in the parish, the first virulent outbreak of the influenza epidemic occurred in the parish, and parish and community forces were organized to meet the emergency. A private hospital was set up and manned by volunteer labor, and Father and his untiring helpers earned the admiration of all by their devoted works of charity to the 27 patients in their care. Father Rouck administered the parish until the new pastor arrived.



The Fisher of Men

Rev. August J. Sprigler came to St. Mary's Parish from Sullivan, Ind., on Aug. 1, 1920, to assume his duties as pastor. He was well fitted by natural endowments and experience to build on the parish foundations laid by his predecessors, and to cement good feeling in the community.

Born on Jan. 6, 1878 at Floyds Knobs, Ind., he received his seminary training at St. Meinrad and was ordained on June 1, 1901. He was subsequently transferred from North Vernon, in 1934, to

the pastorate of Holy Trinity Church, Evansville. Shortly after his transfer, he was named Domestic Prelate by Archbishop Ritter, and his parish incorporated in the newly-established Diocese of Evansville. Holy Trinity Church was struck by lightning and burned during his pastorate, and the parish property converted to Chancery uses. He retired from parish duty in 1957. Always devoted to literary pursuits, he was the author of two able treatises on the spiritual life, one of which was published during his years of retirement.

His friendly attitude and his liking

for fishing and hunting struck a responsive chord in parish and community. Many of his future converts felt their first attraction to the Church when they joined him on these expeditions. Always a close student of the non-Catholic frame of mind, he was indefatigable in his effort to spread the faith. His previous experience with lectures to non-Catholics prompted him to inaugurate a series of Sunday night instructions in his new parish. These were continued for some years, until radio programs preempted the field.





Church Interior Until Recent Repainting

Parish Stability

Father Sprigler soon consolidated some of the loose ends of parish activity which had developed during the years. One of his early decisions was to abolish payment of tuition by pupils in the parish school, and make it a free school supported by the entire parish. Time has indicated the wisdom of this policy. Gradually he eliminated the money-raising enterprises of the numerous parish societies, and the parishoners soon preferred the new system of cash contributions. He was encouraged and notably assisted in this move by Henry Miller. The old school, near the church, was removed. Assessments were paid in April, 1921, for a new sewer on Second Street. The cemetery was enlarged by its second addition, Lot No. 6, which extended it to the city limits, as then established. The services of Joe Horstman were enlisted as parish custodian, in April 1923, and he continued in this capacity, with the respect and appreciation of the entire parish, until his death in 1946. During 1922, the hot-air furnace in the church was replaced with a vapor steam system, which continues to give excellent service. In 1923, the church pulpit was removed and the in-

terior frescoed by Theo. Brasch. Steam radiators were recessed, eliminate new lights installed, new tabernacle added, and the appearance of the edifice vastly improved. In 1926 the lot adjoining the Sisters' residence was purchased, thus completing the square of parish property. Other repairs and improvements of a minor nature were made during the years of his pastorate. The young folks of the parish gave frequent plays in the parish auditorium and contributed to the social atmosphere. The parish numbered about 600 souls, with about 125 pupils enrolled in the three class-rooms of the parish school. Father Sprigler was a good financier and left a substantial balance in the parish treasury.

On June 1, 1926, Father Sprigler celebrated the 25th anniversary of his priesthood. Bishop Chartrand preached at the Solemn High Mass and Father Omer Eisenman was sub-deacon. Many priests attended the ceremonies along with his mother and three brothers.

The Ku-Klux Klan

Father Sprigler's early years were much occupied in countering the obnoxious activity of this movement,

which was then in the ascendancy. For this purpose he used the oratorical ability of Father Pierce Dixon, who had been appointed pastor of St. Joseph Church, at Four Corners, in 1924. Father Sprigler was the guiding genius in selecting strategic spots in the County for Father Dixon's lectures to public audiences and determining the topics of his talks. And he insured a plentiful distribution of free literature at these meetings. Large assemblies were addressed at the Court House in Vernon and in various scattered localities. Bigotry was exposed and disarmed very effectively, and a foundation laid for the good community relations of the present day. So effectively was the work done, that Harry Meloy, an eminent non-Catholic in the community, was elected city mayor on an anti-Klan ticket. Mr. Meloy embraced the Catholic faith during his final illness, and was buried from St. Mary's Church, in 1934.

The parish was saddened by the news of Father Sprigler's change to Evansville, in June 1934. He had struck deep roots in their hearts during his pastorate of 14 years, as was evident in the final reception held in his honor in the parish auditorium. They bade him farewell with heavy hearts, as they wished him "God speed" in his new charge.



St. Mary's Rectory



The Convent



Sexton's House



The Living Pastor

Rev. Omer H. Eisenman arrived on a Saturday afternoon, in time to begin hearing confessions. It was June 29, 1934. That was the beginning of more than 27 years of pastoral work in St. Mary's.

Father Eisenman was born on April 10, 1889, in Louisville, Ky. He was the eldest of four surviving sons, three of whom became priests. His father died in an accident when Father Omer was six years old. He attended grade school in Louisville, New Albany and St. Vincent's, Shelby County, Indiana. After grade school, he served for one year as house boy in the Bishop's house in Indianapolis, before going to St. Meinrad Seminary. He was ordained there on May 27, 1915. He came to North Vernon from Terre Haute.

With school in September, Friday afternoon Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament was started. This was the first of many religious events to be inaugurated, and all were to become annual or continuing events. The next was the annual Blessing of the Children on Holy Family Sunday, which included all the little ones of pre-school age and those in the first grade. First Communion Day was changed to the first Sunday in May, to coincide with the annual May Crowning.

There had been no parish mission for some years, and Father saw an opportunity to schedule one early in the fall of his first year. It was very successful and there were to be more just as fruitful in the years to come.

The successful organization and operation of a parish depends upon many things, one of which is an accurate census. It had been some years since the last census was taken, and a new census became the number one project in St. Mary's. It was completed before Father Eisenman finished his first year in the parish.

Economic conditions in the country were at a low ebb. However, the parish property could not be allowed to deteriorate, so there was work to be done. A new garage was built to house not only three cars, but also a work shop, where benches of maple were to be installed in 1938. New water lines had to be laid, and they were placed below frost-level for the first time. The exterior of the school was painted and a fourth classroom opened. Before Easter of 1936, a new Wicks pipe organ was installed in

the church, replacing one that was probably 100 years old. The Sisters' residence was rebuilt and modernized. All of these improvements necessitated an increase in insurance, which at the close of 1936 totalled \$56,000.00.

The year 1937 opened with the now famous Ohio River Flood. North Vernon was not directly affected, but many of the families evacuated from New Albany and Jeffersonville were quartered in the local C.C.C. Camp. The parishoners of St. Mary's did much to alleviate their misery.

It was during this year that the filling of the school yard was started, only to be completed many years later. To lighten the work of the parish custodian, coal stokers were installed in church, school and rectory. That the parish was growing, could be seen by the school enrollment, which was 137 by the end of that year.

War clouds were beginning to gather over Europe at about this time. Travel could become difficult. Father Eisenman had hoped to make a trip to Europe later, but decided that if he were to go at all he would have to go in 1938. Taking a three month vacation, he toured most of Europe, including Germany and Italy where he saw Hitler and Mussolini. A stop in Ireland, and he was on his way home.

Catholic Rural Life had begun to come to the fore, and the National Meeting of that year was held in Vincennes, Indiana. Present for the closing session, at which Father Eisenman, gave the principal address, were five bishops and many of the diocesan clergy.

The opening of school, in September, was the first to see Negro children enrolled in our parochial school. This was completed quietly and without incident. This year marked the parish organization of the National Council of Catholic Women. Another first was the annual turkey bingo party, which has continued with only a minor interruption.

Challenge of the Times

During the years preceeding World War II, a coal stoker was installed in the Sisters' residence. The rectory needed so many repairs that it was difficult to make a decision. After consultation with an architect, it was decided to remodel and renovate the building. This started early in 1939 and was completed in the

spring of 1940. It was such a complete job that many thought the building has been enlarged, after they examined the interior. All of the waste space had merely been utilized.

Meanwhile, the State Fire Marshall had become more insistent about needed alterations in the parish school, and this building was modernized in 1941, to conform to safety standards. The old blueprints of the school, as built by Father Widerin, being available, formed the basis for the new plans, and saved both time and money. The entire job, of course, involved more than the minimum demanded by the Fire Marshall, because other details could be included with little extra cost as the work progressed. Main improvements were installation of indoor toilets, new wiring, and light fixtures throughout, water lines with increased capacity, new Prox boiler with a change to steam vapor system, masonry walls for boiler room and coal bunkers, new ceiling in auditorium and a large dais to replace the old stage, two extra exits provided for the building and some outdoor walks, and a kitchen to service the auditorium. It added up to about \$10,000.00, and the parish men quickly gathered the small balance needed to defray the cost.

Parish use of Sunday collection envelopes was introduced in October. This was truly an innovation, and some feared they would not work. But with the changing times, new ideas of attitudes prevail and they became a tradition.

The year 1940 was unusual in many respects. St. Mary's has a history of five pastors, three of whom had been born in the New Albany area, and four of whom celebrated their silver jubilees of ordination in this parish. Father Eisenman's jubilee was somewhat unusual in that his two brothers, Fathers Sylvester and Ed, were deacons at the jubilee mass. Bishop (now Cardinal) Ritter, Father Sprigler the former pastor, and Father Holloran his former assistant, all spoke.

Before this year ended, the Jefferson Proving Ground, south-east of North Vernon, was opened. We were also to see the entry of the United States into war on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of this same year. There were to be twelve of the parish boys in military service at the end of the year.

Early in 1942, Father Omer Eisenman was appointed Dean of this Deanery. He was the fourth of St. Mary's pastors to be named for this office.



School children spent many hours in the succeeding years collecting waste paper and scrap iron to further the war effort. Gasoline, tires, car and food rationing were common hardships. This rationing eliminated all parish socials, which were replaced by special collections. Early in February, time itself was rationed, when we went on Daylight Saving Time for the duration.

St. Ann Airport and Freeman Field in Seymour opened for the training of pilots. The Big Inch Oil Line was laid through the northern part of the parish territory. It was later to be changed to gas, and eventually in 1959 to supply North Vernon with natural gas.

The gasoline rationing had many effects on the parish. It was necessary to forego Forty Hours and substitute Days of Exposition at intervals through the year. It did not, however, prevent Father

Eisenman from conducting a Retreat for the Ordinands at St. Meinrad in 1943. We also were to have a mission, conducted by Father Peter Forbes, C.S.S.R., before the year ended.

As a sidelight of the year, the customary gifts of Christmas candy for the school children had to be abandoned, as none was available during the war years. Drives of one kind or another became the order of the day, leaving the pastor and parishoners wondering what would be next. It was not until late in 1944 that rationing eased slightly, leaving hope that victory would come into the picture. The war effort of the parish was very commendable. Among the 126 young men from this parish that served in the armed forces only one, Capt. Bradford Hesser, met death in action.

The School Boy Patrol was organized in this year of 1944, and it has con-

tinued with steady improvement until the present. Much credit for its success must go to our Sisters. Another innovation for this year was the Holy Hour on New Year's Eve, which was continued in succeeding years.

The Church was growing throughout Indiana, and the growth here in North Vernon was in proportion. This could be seen by the division of the State into four dioceses, in 1944, when Evansville was separated from the Diocese of Indianapolis, and Indianapolis was elevated to an archdiocese. Bishop Ritter was the first Archbishop of Indianapolis.

The parish property, now growing in extent and value, was appraised at nearly \$90,000.00. This was due both to improvements of previous years and to the growing inflation. War ended in Europe on May 8, 1945, and was celebrated with a special evening service. However, war

regulations were not eased much for some time. Socials could not be held and the Entertainment Fund continued to be collected. Food and clothing collections occupied time. These were eventually replaced by the annual Bishops War Relief Fund.

This year also saw the beginning of one of the severest problems for the parish. Mr. Joseph Horstman, the faithful parish sexton, was taken ill and underwent a surgical operation. He was not destined to resume his duties, and died the following year. Replacement was next to impossible, and many years passed and many trials were made before a satisfactory substitute was found.

The first annual Missionary Collection, under the auspices of the Propagation of the Faith, was taken up in May of 1946, and continues to the present. This was one of Archbishop Ritter's last contributions to the missionary effort of our parishes before his transfer to St. Louis. Archbishop Paul C. Schulte was installed as his successor on Oct. 10 of that year. It was also during this year that our school children received their first immunization against diphtheria and smallpox. The interior of the church was again washed, but it was evident that the fresco would not stand another cleaning.

The Blessing of the Assistants

St. Mary's had been growing during the war years. Many new people moved to North Vernon. More of the young people settled here, and the number of converts increased. The pastor had often asked for an assistant, but young priests were not available. Many had been in service as chaplains, more new parishes had been formed. However, about this time, some were returning from service. So it was that Archbishop Schulte saw fit to send Rev. Bernard Gerdon to St. Mary's as assistant pastor. He arrived on June 18, 1947, and enthusiastically accepted the challenge of a back-log of work and opportunity. Father Eisenman was exhausted, and had been unable to find a substitute, so he immediately took advantage of Father Gerdon's arrival and left for a vacation. The Archbishop gave him an indefinite leave of absence. He was absent two months, spending the time with his mother and brothers at the Indian Mission in South Dakota. He returned, only to be called back im-

mediately by the accidental death of his brother, Leonard, at St. Paul's Indian Mission, Marty, S.D.

That fall saw the change to three Sunday masses, at 6:00, 8:00, and 10:00, and much activity for the youth of the parish was started. There being three parishes in Jennings County and no definite parish boundaries, the Archbishop directed the establishment of such boundaries at the Fall Conference for the Clergy. These were soon prepared by the Dean, Father Eisenman, as outlined in this booklet. Father Gerdon was very active in the affairs of the parish. He had weekly instructions for the High School students and many convert classes. He also was instrumental in establishing the Parish Praesidium of the Legion of Mary. This did not keep him from being delegated, along with Rev. Cyril Conell of Four Corners, to form an Archdiocesan Mission Band to conduct Forty Hours in the Archdiocese. They also started the Street Preaching program that year. One wonders when they found time to sleep. Soon was to begin the promotion of laymen's retreats, at Alverna Retreat House, which had recently been constructed in Indianapolis by Archbishop Schulte.

Rev. Sylvester Eisenman, O.S.B. died on Sept. 14, 1948, after 32 years of missionary work among the Indians in South Dakota. Father attended the funeral and returned to his parish some ten days later.

Many parishes of the archdiocese were experiencing growing pains, and money for expansion was difficult to obtain except at a rather high rate of interest. Archbishop Schulte, at that time, established the Archdiocesan Emergency Fund. To get the drive off to a good start, the various pastors in each area exchanged pulpits for one Sunday. By the end of the year \$4,000 had been contributed by St. Mary's of North Vernon. To give an idea of growing inflation, the parish valuations by this time had reached the total of \$187,500.00.

After the War

The events of the war had taught many lessons. The Church was cognizant of these, and soon all parish records were sent to the Chancery Office to be microfilmed. There, to be stored and kept for future years.

Father Gerdon was transferred to St. Ann's Parish, Hamburg, early in May of 1949. The parish gave him a farewell reception and a purse in appreciation

of his hard and faithful work. Rev. Raymond Gates replaced him as parish assistant. These were the opening events of the year.

Improvements in parish property had of necessity been put off because materials were unavailable. Much needed to be done. The old slate roofs had been giving trouble over the years, so in the summer of 1949 new asbestos shingle roofs were put on Church, school and rectory. New guttering was needed on all these buildings, and this was replaced with copper. New lightning rods were installed. The slate of the church tower was in bad condition, and this also was replaced with copper, by John B. Kress of Columbus. The tower clock movement was in excellent condition, but new dials were installed. Repairs were made to bell mountings. The entire job amounted to about \$20,000.00, and was paid in full from the parish treasury. Then two extra church entrances were constructed on the side toward the rectory. These extra exits were long overdue and they were welcomed by the congregation and especially by the children who used the gallery.

Father Gates was replaced by Rev. William Stineman, as assistant, early in the summer. At his coming, three masses were scheduled for all Holydays of Obligation. However Father Stineman was to stay only long enough to say "Hello", as he was transferred in January of 1950. Rev. William O'Brien came from Tell City to take up where Father Stineman left off.

At this time, the assembly room in the school basement was improved with a new ceiling and light fixtures, and tablet-arm chairs installed. It was to serve many purposes in future years, especially as a lunch room for the school children and a convenient place of assembly for meetings and instructions. The school boiler was also changed from vapor to pressure system, with necessary alterations in the steam mains, and motor valves installed, to insure better distribution of heat to all parts of the building. Provision was made to vent any excess heat into the auditorium circuit. We were grateful for this improvement during the cold winter which followed, when temperatures of twenty to thirty degrees below zero were recorded.

In 1950, we had the Rosary Crusade, conducted by Father Patrick Peyton, C.S.C., in the Archdiocese. This entailed considerable work for all. It was quite successful.



**The Living Assistants Present For The 25th ANNIVERSARY
Of Father Eisenman's Pastorate 1959
Fathers: O'BRIEN, GERDON, AJAMIE, STINEMAN, and SCHMITZ**

There were several minor improvements in 1951. The Knights of Columbus raised sufficient money to obtain kneeler pads for the church, and at about the same time, rubber tile was laid in the sanctuary.

Late in the summer, Father O'Brien was transferred to Richmond, while Rev. Thomas Kinnevey came, as assistant, from Holy Cross Parish, Indianapolis. Father Kinnevey was quite young, but in poor health. One would not have guessed his physical condition by the volume of work which he undertook. However, late the following year, his rheumatic heart began to fail, and when his condition became critical, Father Eisenman had him taken to St. Vincent's Hospital in Indianapolis, on Dec. 21. The people of the parish were untiring in their prayers, because they had learned to love their young priest. The final mass on Christmas morning had just been sung in the parish when word arrived of his death. It was a sad Christmas for all. Father Eisenman preached the sermon at his funeral in Indian-

apolis. Then began weary weeks for the pastor who was left without a helper. Priests came from the Jesuit college at West Baden, to help with Sunday masses. This continued until the middle of March, 1953, when Rev. Albert Ajamie came to St. Mary's.

Accent on Youth

Possibly Father Kinnevey should be considered as our first youthful parish assistant, but his untimely death cut short his work in the parish. With the arrival of Rev. Albert Ajamie, youth began to come to the fore. A parish C.Y.O. (Catholic Youth Organization) was formed, and weekly instructions for high school students were resumed. Effort was made to have some of the public high school students attend Shawe Memorial High School in Madison. Annual outing trips were started for the mass servers and also for the choir girls. The school enrollment was up to 185, and the class-rooms were getting more

crowded. New teacher desks were purchased, along with more desks for pupils. This was only a temporary solution. At this time, an architect was engaged to go over the school problem. More class-rooms were needed. It was decided not to break up the auditorium into class-rooms, but to build a four-room addition. Plans were drawn, and in the spring of 1954 bids were taken. Dunlap and Company was awarded the general contract, and Howard E. Schmidt & Co. the plumbing, heating and electrical work. These were the low bidders.

The fall of 1953 was exceptionally dry. Water in the city was rationed. A new reservoir had been completed, but no rains had come to fill it. Every effort was made to keep the city in water, and these were successful, until rain came in January of 1954.

When work started on the school addition, the insurance valuation of parish property stood at \$217,000.00. Work progressed during the summer of 1954. By the time school opened, the new building was well along, but not



Father Koopman

ready for occupancy until the following February. Meanwhile the men of the parish were busy getting subscriptions to defray the cost of the school addition, supplementing the money in the parish treasury. They successfully raised the balance, and the entire cost of about \$65,000.00 was paid in cash on completion of the contracts. In fact, a balance remained in the parish treasury. On Feb. 13, 1955, after the 8 o'clock Sunday mass, the new addition was blessed and then opened all day for visitors. The officials of the city schools came and marvelled at the convenience and simple beauty of the new class-rooms.

It was during the summer of 1954 that the Sisters of Oldenburg modified their habits at the suggestion of the Holy Father. We hardly recognized them in their new habits. In 1955, the parish invested in its first school bus, to be used for transportation of students to Shawe Memorial High School and for the use of St. Mary's athletic teams. The practice of the bi-monthly Day of Adoration was started about this time, with the church kept open for private adoration until 9 P.M.

More improvements were needed. The sexton's residence had long been in bad condition, and work was started on it during the summer of 1955. The entire house was rebuilt and renovated, a full basement excavated, and hot-air furnace installed, floors and plaster renewed, and bathrooms added. The house was made into an excellent home.

By fall, when 218 children enrolled in the school, things were on a fairly even keel. These 218 children represented about 23% of all North Vernon

primary pupils. There were also 18 parish students in Shawe Memorial High School. Holy Hour closed the year as usual. Parish insurance then totaled \$276,500.00.

The parish cemetery had gradually more crowded with the passage of the years, and no additional ground was available. However, after two years of parish prayer, the solution came when a large firm wanted to locate in North Vernon. A local company, formed many years prior to promote community enterprises, purchased a large tract of ground adjoining our cemetery, for location of the new industry. In turn, on Apr. 11, 1956, it sold to the parish 8.1 acres of ground adjoining our cemetery. Several years were to pass before the tract could be developed and added to the cemetery. By the summer of 1961 drives were graded and rocked, grass seed sown, and several sections laid out in lots.

The Archbishop outlined a Census and Information Program early in the year of 1956, which demanded nearly two months of parish effort. It was a very constructive move and provided many opportunities for convert classes. These were conducted by Father Ajamie, and several were instructed and entered the Church at this time. Records show that the Archbishop later confirmed 18 converts, some of whom resulted from this program.

That year also saw Father Eisenman take his second trip to Europe, and this time he spent the major portion of his vacation in Rome. Due to foot and leg trouble, which was to later put him in bed, he cut short his tour.

Parking of cars during the Sunday masses began to present a problem, with the continued growth of the parish. During the summer the school yard was finally filled, graded and black-topped, and provided an excellent play-ground and parking lot. The local Lions Club donated a bicycle-rack for the school, and it was later supplemented with other racks purchased by the parish. The year closed with a drive by the Archbishop to obtain funds for a retirement home in Indianapolis.

Both Father Ajamie and the pastor had been spending much time and effort, trying to find a sexton for the church and a housekeeper for the rectory. These pressing problems remained unsolved for many months, and on May 20, 1957, Rev. Bernard Schmitz, a newly-ordained priest, arrived to replace Father Ajamie, only to find that he had



Father Kinnevey

to help with the cooking. In fact, he declared that he had trouble finding a skiller on his first morning.

Early in the year, the wooden bell louvres of the church tower were replaced with copper. This was quite an improvement and eliminated the need for frequent painting, which at that height was always difficult and expensive. More changes were made on the parish premises with the removal of the old iron fences. Also the spacious playground east of the rectory was finally in condition to be black-topped, and the completion of this job made a very welcome addition to the parking area.

Father Schmitz went to work as though he enjoyed it, and he soon had all the school children busy. He organized the C.Y.O. and he was destined to organize it yet another time before he got it on a working basis. Instruction classes for high school students were formed, and these were large enough to require additional teacher help by members of the parish. The school enrollment of 230 children, indicating further parish growth, required more school desks. The Sunday mass schedule was increased with masses at 6:00, 7:30, 9:00, and 10:30. In addition to the three morning masses on Holydays there was also an evening mass at 7:30. A mimeograph was purchased, to prepare the Sunday bulletins which replaced the verbal announcements at Mass.

By this time, the insurance on parish property had risen to \$305,000.00. Another indication of the increasing size of the parish was the Confirmation Class of early 1959, with its 90 children and 23 adults.



Shawz Student Pat York, Carole Schwacke and Driver Ambrose Gerth
Standing in Front of Parish School Bus.

Time Marches On

On June 29, 1959, the parish celebrated the 25th year of Father Eisenman's pastorate. In attendance were all of his former assistants, except the two who had died. Father Rouck also joined in the celebration. Father Gerdon and Mayor Gregory made the principal speeches, and Father Schmitz presented Father Eisenman with a generous check from the parish. Also present were Father Eisenman's 91 year old mother, and his brother, Father Ed. Many priests from neighboring parishes added to the glad occasion.

Soon after the jubilee, the parish purchased the old King property on Clay St., near the church. Work began on the cemetery addition, which had been acquired several years earlier. It was leveled, trees were removed and several old cisterns filled. The bank along the railroad was graded and seeded. Altogether, it was an extensive operation. Driveways were to come during the following year. Reverses of weather and

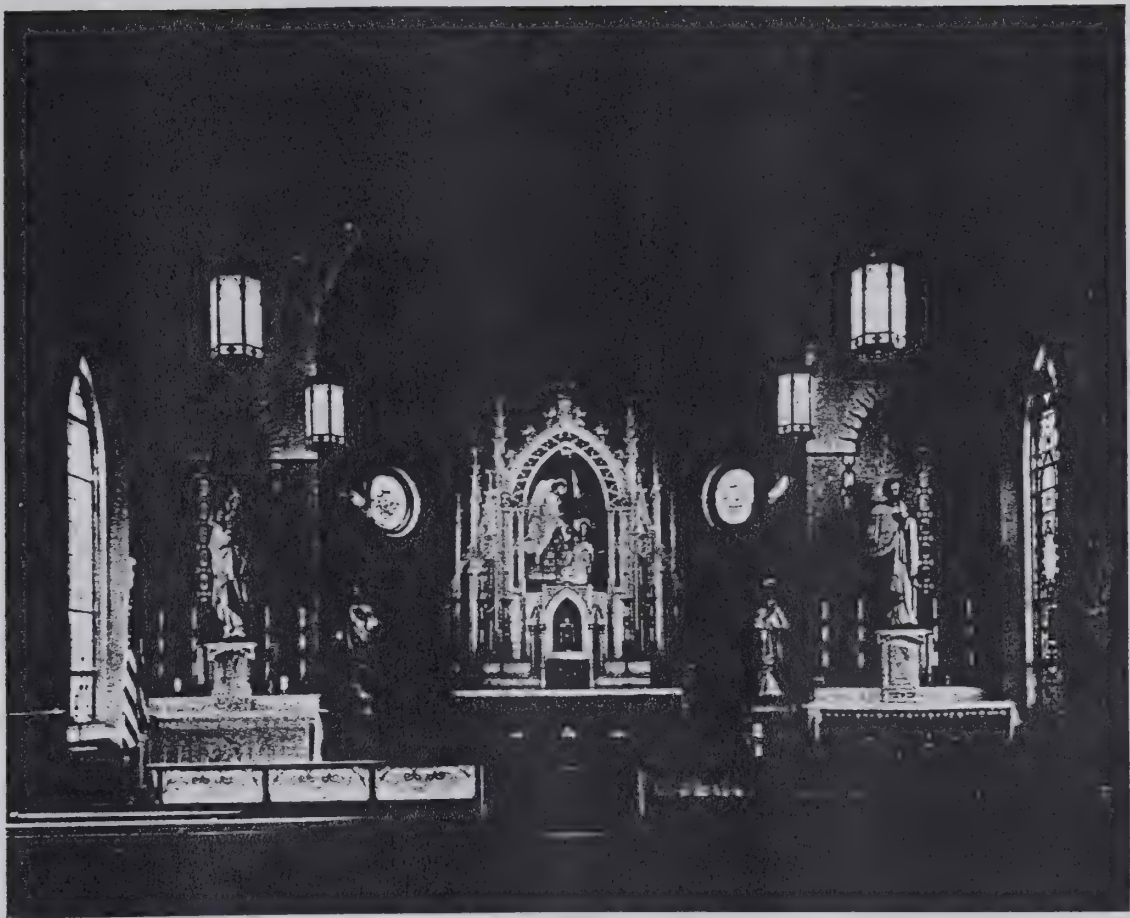
failures of operation seemed to dog the enterprise from beginning to end, over a period of several years. Seeding was done in the fall of 1960, but between weather and birds, results were poor. It was reseeded in the spring of 1961.

While the area was being cleared and graded, in October of 1959, Father Eisenman developed Phlebitis and had to be taken to the hospital. During his stay here, his aged mother died and he returned home to attend the funeral. Father sat in a wheel chair in the sanctuary to attend the funeral. He was not able to celebrate mass until Christmas, and after that date he spent another month in bed.

During the summer of 1960 the stoker-fired furnaces of the church, rectory, Sister's residence and sexton's house were converted to natural gas. Coal continued to be used in the school during the following winter, until the supply was exhausted, and then the school was converted. This change lightened the work load of the sexton, and also insured better heat.

During the fall of 1960, the community remained on Daylight Saving Time, but the schools returned to Standard Time, which made it impossible to continue the customary early morning mass for the children. The daily school mass was accordingly changed to the noon hour, and the result was a big increase in communions. A check at the end of the year showed an average of 1,000 communions per week, including the summer season. The year included a mission by Rev. John Glennon, C.S.S.R. late in September. At its conclusion, Father Schmitz conducted an inquiry Class, which brought to 17 the number of converts for the year. All were instructed by him. The 48 infants baptized during the year gave promise of some large first grades coming up in the school. Year-end statistics showed 1151 souls in the parish and 243 pupils in the school.

Late in 1960, under the guidance of Father Schmitz, the Knights of Columbus built a new Home. Their old building was sold to Calvert Klinger, and



Church Interior 1961

several lots purchased from him on Buckeye Street where the new Home was built. Fathers Eisenman and Schmitz blessed the building on the day of dedication, January 20, 1960.

The next improvement in the parish property was complete renovation of the church interior. It was completely re-wired, insulated and all plaster repaired. The color scheme was changed to a delicate blue in the body of the church. Statues were refinished and altars done in white and gold. The three former lights above the aisle were removed and four new lantern type fixtures installed on each side above the pews. Former decorative lights on the main altar were discarded, and flood lights installed in the ceiling above the altar and in brackets of the sanctuary walls, to light the main altar. It would have delighted Father Missi to see his beautiful altar adequately lighted,

finally, 93 years after its installation, and given a new perspective. The two side altars were simplified, with the superstructures removed and the large statues of the Blessed Mother and St. Joseph again mounted to advantage on their proper altars. The confessional was rebuilt and rendered soundproof, after being equipped with a hearing-aid and proper light for the direction of penitents, and fitted with a ventilating fan.

About the time all this work was completed, Father Schmitz received word of his transfer to Brazil, Indiana. He had been assistant pastor here for four years. The parish bade him reluctant farewell in the auditorium on Wednesday night, May 17, at which time he was presented with a check by the parish. His successor, Rev. Bernard Koopman, newly-ordained, arrived on May 20. Another "Bernard", and another priest from the New Albany area.

Father Koopman immediately began to devote his attention to the sick persons in the parish, and to familiarize himself with all the complexities of parish routine. He continued the instruction of converts, and found it easy to make friends. Another member of his seminary class, Rev. Lester Burgmeier of this parish, had been ordained in Rome, where he completed his theological course. He celebrated his First Solemn Mass at St. Mary's on July 16.

Thus endeth the first hundred years in the annals of St. Mary's Parish.

The Parish Prayer

May the Blessed Mother continue her protection, and may she lead us ever more surely to the feet of her Divine Son. May we learn from her the "charity of God and the patience of Christ."

List of Pastors and Assistant Pastors

Rev. J. M. Missi, Founder of the Parish, Pastor from Jan. 6, 1868 until Dec. 3, 1889. (He attended St. Mary's parish as a Mission from St. Ann's Church during the years 1859 to 1868.)

Rev. August Sennefeld was Parish Administrator from Aug. 1889 until Jan. 1890.

Rev. G. M. Ginnsz was Pastor from Jan. 1890 until Feb. 1892.

Rev. Ferdinand Hundt was Pastor from Feb. 1892 until Nov. 1892.

Rev. J. Adam Ulrich was Pastor (or Administrator) from Nov. 1892 until Apr. 3, 1893. (He resided at St. Ann's Church)

Rev. George L. T. Widerin was Pastor from Apr. 3, 1893 until his death on Feb. 3, 1920.

Rev. Meinrad Rouck was appointed Assistant to Father Widerin on May 1918, and he administered the Parish after the Pastor's death until July 22, 1920.

Rev. August J. Sprigler was Pastor from July 22, 1920 until his transfer to Evansville on June 28, 1934.

Rev. Omer H. Eisenman was Pastor from June 29, 1934 until

Rev. Bernard Gerdon was Assistant Pastor from June 18, 1947 to May 5, 1949.

Rev. Raymond Gates was Assistant Pastor from May 5, 1949 to July 29, 1949.

Rev. William Stineman, M.S.E., was Assistant Pastor from July 28, 1949 to Jan. 30, 1950.

Rev. William O'Brien was Assistant Pastor from Feb. 1, 1950 to Aug. 29, 1951.

Rev. Thomas J. Kinnevey was Assistant Pastor from Aug. 29, 1951 until his death on Dec. 25, 1952.

Rev. Albert Ajamie, M.A., S.T.L., was Assistant Pastor from Mch. 10, 1953 to May 20, 1957.

Rev. Bernard R. Schmitz was Assistant Pastor from May 20, 1957 to May 20, 1961.

Rev. Bernard Koopman appointed Assistant Pastor on May 20, 1961.

Priests From the Parish

Joseph I. Klein was ordained on Dec. 23, 1893 and labored in the Diocese of Austin. He died on June 5, 1920 at Waco, Texas, and is interred in St. Mary's Cemetery, North Vernon, Indiana.

Rev. Lester Burgmeier was ordained on Dec. 18, 1960 at the North American College in Rome for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

From Scipio

Rev. Francis X. Hillen was ordained on May 25, 1916 for the Diocese of Indianapolis. He died on March 25, 1938.

Religious From the Parish

Mary Foley (Rev. Mother M. Cleophas). Professed in 1862, Sisters of Providence, St. Mary's-of-the-Woods, Ind. She was a teacher for 10 years, Mistress of Novices for 18 years, Superior General for 36 years.

Margaret Foley (Sister M. Aloysius). Professed in 1862, Sisters of Providence, St. Mary's-of-the-Woods, Ind. She was a sister of Mother Cleophas.

Florence Langenhurst (Sister M. Car-

melita). Professed, Sisters of Providence, St. Mary's-of-the-Woods, Ind. One time manager of temporalities at the Motherhouse.

Rose Sadler (Sister M. Geraldine). Professed, Sisters of Providence, St. Mary's-of-the-Woods, Ind. Former Superior at Providence High School, Chicago, and at St. Agnes Academy, Indianapolis.

Catherine Tierney (Sister). Professed, Sisters of Providence, St. Mary's-of-the-Woods, Ind.

* * * * *

Mary Otis (Sister Charles Borromeo). Professed, Sisters of Charity, Cincinnati, O.

Nora Higgins (Sister M. Rose). Professed, Third Order of St. Francis of the Immaculate Conception of B.V.M., Mount St. Clare, Clinton, Iowa.

Elizabeth Riplinger (Sister M. Francis of Assisi). Professed 1897 (?), Sisters of the Good Shepherd, Indianapolis, Ind.

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Elizabeth Gottwalles (Sister M. Ambrosia). Professed, Sisters of III Order of St. Francis, Oldenburg, Ind.

Dorothy Burkert (Sister M. Prudentia). Professed 1883, Sisters of III Order of St. Francis, Oldenburg, Ind.

Frances Herner (Sister M. Theresa). Professed 1886, Sisters of Order of St. Francis, Oldenburg, Ind.

Mary Srien (Sister M. Ferdinand). Professed 1889, Sisters of III Order of St. Francis, Oldenburg, Ind.

Leona Zohrlaut (Sister M. Hope). Professed 1924 (?), Sisters of III Order of St. Francis, Oldenburg, Ind.

Mildred Grein (Sister Dorine Clare). Professed 1949, Sisters of III Order of St. Francis, Oldenburg, Ind.

Joan Schwacke (Sister M. Verna). Professed 1959, Sisters of III Order of St. Francis, Oldenburg, Ind.

Amelia Sorg (Sister Mary Cecilia). Professed 1959, Sisters of III Order of St. Francis, Oldenburg, Ind.

Chronological Table of Parish Improvements

- 1861—Parish founded. First portion of church built (55 ft. x 35 ft.) by *Fr. Missi*.
- 1864—Parish cemetery opened. John Rech first burial, in 1864.
- 1865—First Parish school built (2 story brick, 2 rooms.)
- 1868—Rear portion of church and sanctuary built, and main altar installed. First two rooms of Rectory built.
- 1872—Sisters of St. Francis, from Oldenburg, began teaching in parish school, replacing lay teachers. Resided in a residence donated by Mrs. Winters on Madison Ave. (now Second St.).
- 1880—Side Altars installed in church.
- 1885—Present Sisters' residence constructed (1st floor only).
- 1886—Church bells installed. Rectory remodeled and enlarged.
- 1887—Cemetery mortuary chapel erected.
- 1892—Statue of Sacred Heart dedicated by *Fr. Hundt*.
- 1893—Church roof repaired and stained glass windows installed, by *Fr. Widerin*.
- 1893—Statue of Sacred Heart of Mary presented to Church by St. Rose's Young Ladies Society cost \$100.
- 1895—Iron fence erected on Parish premises.
- 1896-7—Church tower erected, clock installed and new peal of bells installed.
- 1902—Church frescoed, circular windows, new floors and first pipe organ installed.
- 1904—Cemetery fenced and tiled. Rectory enlarged.
- 1905—Present school ground acquired.
- 1907—Present school erected. First cemetery addition purchased.
- 1911—Church stations erected, communion rail installed. Rectory hot water heating plant installed, second story added to Sisters' residence, sidewalks constructed and property connected to sewer.
- 1912—Hot air furnace installed in church. Present janitor's residence erected.
- 1914—Sanctuary improved.
- 1917—Flag pole erected. Lots acquired east of rectory (present parking lot).
- 1920—Parish school made tuition-free, by *Fr. Sprigler*.
- 1922—Church vapor steam plant installed. Second enlargement of cemetery.
- 1923—Pulpit removed, church frescoed, new tabernacle and lights, holy water founts.
- 1926—Lot purchased adjoining Sisters' residence.
- 1934—Change from 3 to 4 classrooms, by *Fr. Eisenman*. Rectory garage constructed, yard improvements.
- 1936—Wicks pipe organ installed in church. Sisters' residence remodelled and modernized.
- 1937—Coal stokers installed in church, school and rectory.
- 1938—Negro pupils enrolled in parish school.
- 1939—Coal stoker installed in Sisters' residence. Rectory remodeled. Envelope collections introduced in the parish.
- 1940—Copper crosses put on church and school.
- 1941—School modernized.
- 1946—New boiler installed in church.
- 1947—Boundaries established for Parish in Jennings County.
- 1949—Church tower roofed with copper, copper gutters and downspouts and new roofs on all main buildings. New clock dials and bell mountings. Side entrances added to church.
- 1950—Rubber tile in church aisles and accoustical confessional. Motor valve controls installed on school steam lines.
- 1951—Church kneeler pads, rubber tile in sanctuary.
- 1953—Church windows repaired and ventilators divided.
- 1954—School addition constructed, with four classrooms and two rest rooms. Ceiling insulated in old portion of school. First lay teacher employed, and a fifth classroom opened. Lot purchased to enlarge parking area.
- 1955—Janitor's residence reconstructed and modernized. School bus purchased for transportation to Shawe Memorial High School at Madison.
- 1956—Third addition to cemetery acquired. (8.1 acres)
- 1957—Copper shutters installed in church tower.
- 1958—Four masses scheduled for Sundays.
- 1959—Blacktopping of parking area completed. Church steps and walks reconstructed. Purchase of lot and residence on Clay St., adjoining Janitor's residence. Second lay teacher employed, and a sixth classroom opened.
- 1960—Cemetery addition landscaped and drives constructed. Parish heating plants changed from coal to natural gas.
- 1961—Church improvements: rewired, new fixtures, upper poriton of side altars removed, interior re-decorated and ceiling insulated.

Parish Boundaries in Jennings County

(Established 1947)

ST. ANN'S PARISH (and St. Dennis Mission) in the N.E. part of the county is roughly bounded on the west by the N.Y.C. R.R.; on the south by the southern boundary of the Airport; and on the east by the Muscatatuck River. Included is the neighborhood of Zenas.

ST. JOSEPH'S PARISH embraces Spencer and Marion Townships, plus a small area of Lovett Township in the neighborhood of Weston.

ST. MARY'S PARISH embraces the remainder of Jennings County, to wit:

Geneva Township; In its entirety.
Center Township; All except the area east of the Airport.

Columbia Township: Only the S.E. Corner east of the Muscatatuck River. (This area runs two miles, north and south.)

Campbell Township: All east of Muscatatuck River.

Bigger Township: In its entirety.

Vernon Township: In its entirety.

Lovett Township: All east of a north and south line two miles east of Weston.

Montgomery Township: In its entirety.

NOTE: Families living in areas just beyond the north or south boundaries of Jennings County may affiliate with their most convenient Parish.

ECKMAN
NDERY INC.



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